

Entry of this preliminary amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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to another satellite in the constellation and then typically to a ground station which is connected to conventional land-based networks.

Alternative schemes use so-called medium 5 earth orbit (MEO) satellite constellations with an orbital radius in the range of 10-20,000 km.

Reference is directed to the ICO™ satellite cellular system described for example in GB-A-2 295 296. With this system, the satellite communications link does 10 not permit communication between adjacent satellites. Instead, a signal from a mobile user terminal such as a mobile handset is directed firstly to the satellite and then directed to a ground station or satellite access node (SAN), connected to conventional land-based telephone networks. This has the advantage that 15 many components of the system are compatible with known digital terrestrial cellular technology such as GSM. Also simpler satellite communication techniques can be used than with a LEO network. Reference is 20 directed to "New Satellites for Personal Communications", Scientific American, April 1998, pp.

[60 - 67] 70-77 for an overview of LEO/MEO satellite networks.

Figure 1 shows a planar constellation of 25 communications satellites 10 disposed about the earth 14.